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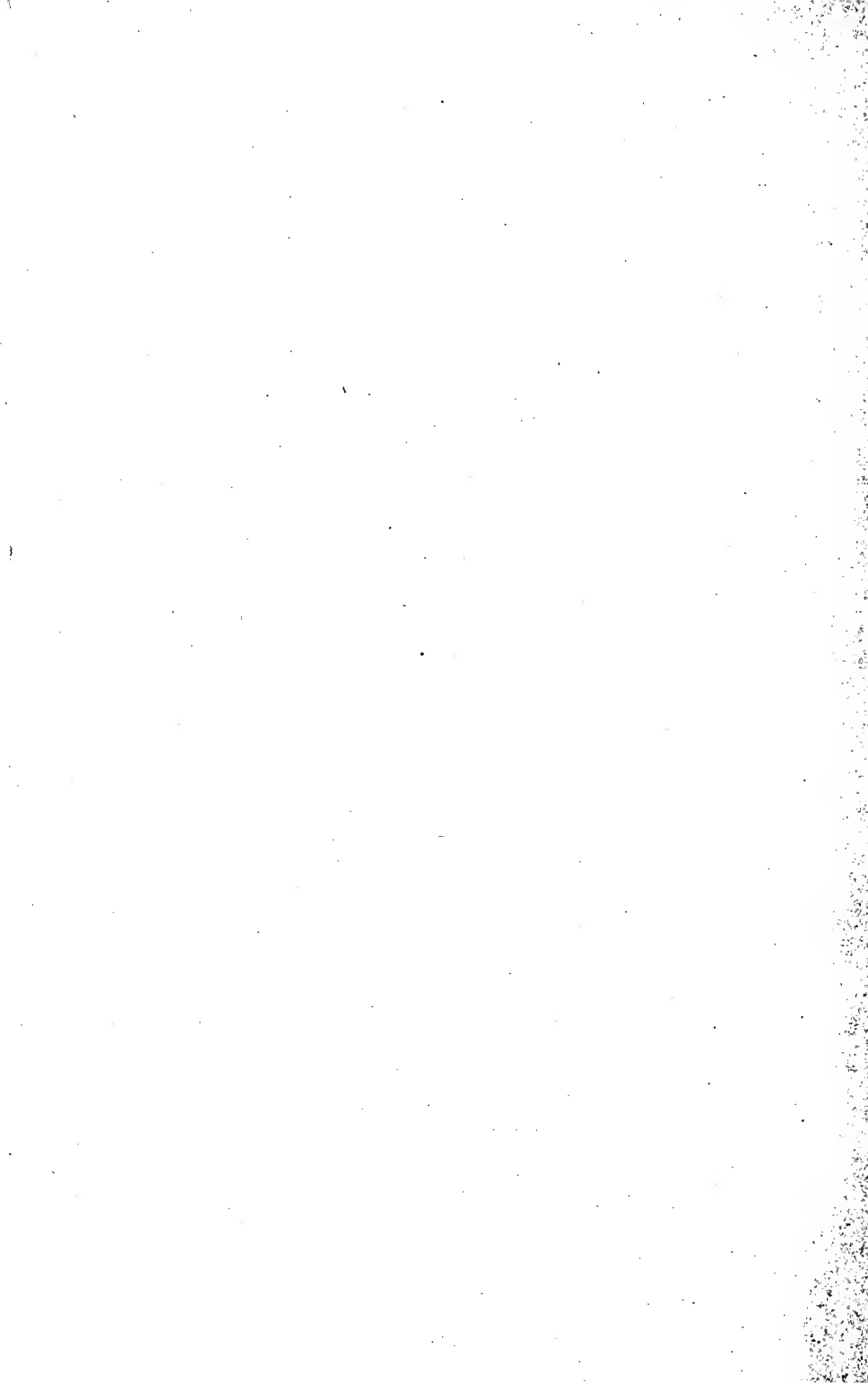
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THE
SEVENTY-SECOND REGIMENT,
PENNSYLVANIA VOLUNTEERS,
AT
BLOODY ANGLE,
GETTYSBURG.



Pennsylvania Infantry. 90th Regt.

THE

SEVENTY-SECOND REGIMENT,

PENNSYLVANIA VOLUNTEERS,

AT

BLOODY ANGLE,

GETTYSBURG.



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1874

COMMITTEE ON MONUMENT.

JOHN REED,

SYLVESTER BYRNE,

FREDERICK MIDDLETON,

JULIUS B. ALLEN,

CHARLES W. DEVITT.

JOHN REED, *Chairman.*

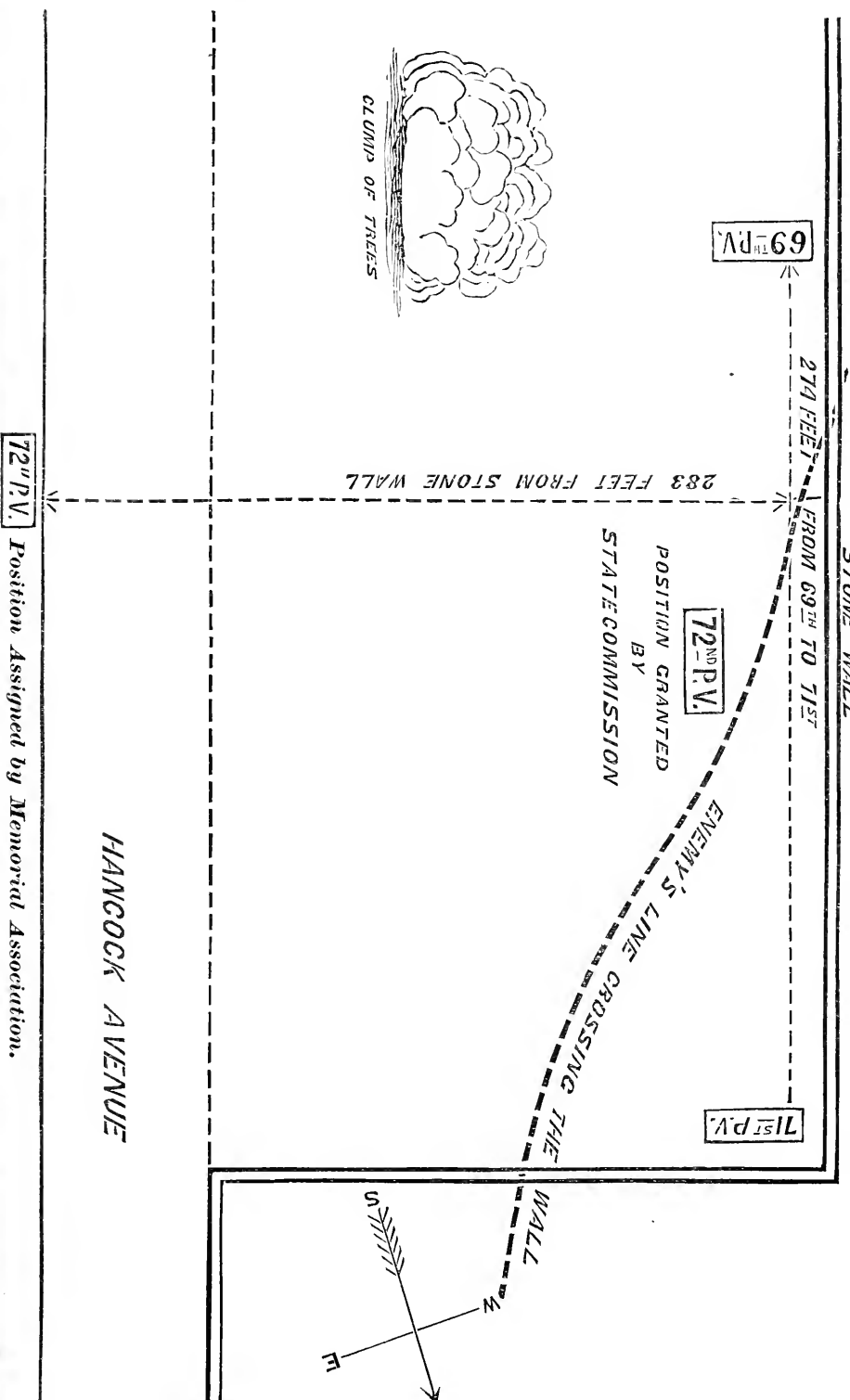
SYLVESTER BYRNE, *Secretary.*

FREDERICK MIDDLETON, *Treasurer.*

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DIAGRAM OF BLOODY ANGLE, GETTYSBURG.



ORDER OF EXERCISES.

PENNSYLVANIA DAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH, 1889.

DIRGE, by the Band.

PRAYER, by Rev. William H. Clark, Pastor of the Second Reformed Church in America, 7th and Brown Streets, Philadelphia.

ADDRESS, by Comrade John Reed, on behalf of the Monument Committee.

ORATION, by Capt. William W. Ker, of the 73d Reg. Penna. Vols.

SALUTE, three volleys, by the Guard of Post 51 G. A. R.

ADDRESS,

BY COMRADE JOHN REED.

Ladies and Gentlemen :

It is due to you and to our comrades here assembled, that the Monument Committee of the Seventy-Second Regiment should explain why our monument remains unbuilt, why we are unable to dedicate it, and why we hold these exercises in this place to-day. Gettysburg is in Pennsylvania, and the battle of Gettysburg was the great and decisive struggle of the War of the Rebellion. It is true that regiments and commands from other loyal States participated in it, and bravely performed their part; but it was Pennsylvania's battle-field, and Pennsylvanians have more than a common interest in it. The grounds on which the battle was fought are now owned by the Gettysburg Battle-Field Memorial Association, which was incorporated "to hold and preserve the battle-grounds of Gettysburg, on which were fought the actions of the first, second and third days of July, 1863, with the natural and artificial defenses, as they were at the time of said battle, and by such memorial structures as a generous and patriotic people may aid to erect, to commemorate the heroic deeds, the struggles and the triumphs of their brave defenders; and to erect and promote the erection, by voluntary contributions, of structures and works of art and taste thereon, adapted to designate the spots of special interest, to commemorate the great deeds of valor, endurance, and noble self-sacrifice, and to perpetuate the memory of the heroes and the signal events which render these battle-grounds illustrious." This corporation is composed of shareholders, some of whom are citizens of this State and others of other States, and is managed by a Board of twenty-one Directors, elected

by the shareholders, to which are added the Governors of such States as shall, by legislative appropriation, contribute funds for the support of the Association; and if the Governor of any State is unable to be present at the meetings, he has the power to substitute a citizen of his State to represent his State. The Legislature of our State has contributed large sums of the public money to aid this corporation; but Pennsylvania has only a voice in common with all the other States in the management of its affairs or the direction of its work. Around this field you see numbers of monuments and tablets. Some of them were erected by the survivors of regiments or commands, and others by the Legislatures of States; but each was intended to mark the place where a command fought, or to designate a spot of special interest. These monuments and tablets are not now the property of the persons or States that erected them, but belong to the Memorial Association, and may be moved from place to place, at the whim or caprice of the Board of Directors; and indeed, I am informed that some of them have been moved from their original positions to make way for so-called improvements.

The Legislature of the State of Pennsylvania determined to erect monuments of its own to mark the spot where each Pennsylvania command was engaged in the battle, and it was intended that these monuments should remain the property of the State, and should not be in any way under the control of the Memorial Association. For this purpose, in 1887 an act was passed, requiring the Governor to appoint five Commissioners, to co-operate with five of the survivors of each Pennsylvania command, and select and locate a monument, in bronze or granite, to mark the spot where that command was engaged in the battle of Gettysburg, and appropriated the sum of fifteen hundred dollars to pay for each monument. The five Commissioners were appointed, and myself and four others were selected by our comrades of the Seventy-Second Pennsylvania to represent our Regiment, and to co-operate with the Commissioners in the selection and location of our monument. The Commissioners were competent

gentlemen, who went about their work with great deliberation, and gave our claims patient and careful consideration. There was no difficulty in selecting the monument which you see before you, and as the fifteen hundred dollars appropriated by the Legislature were much less than the contract price, our comrades contributed the necessary amount. There were many witnesses—probably fifty of them—examined, and a great deal of testimony was taken by the Commissioners to enable them to determine the proper location, some of the witnesses being our own men and others being men from other regiments and Cushing's Battery, but all of them being men who were present at the battle and saw what they testified to; and after hearing the testimony and proofs, the Commissioners unanimously decided that here in this angle was the place where we fought, was the place where we were engaged in the battle, and that our monument should be erected upon this spot. It is generally supposed that the Legislature of our State has the right to erect a public building, or a public monument, and to designate the person who shall erect it, and the spot upon which it shall be erected, and to take the land of any citizen or corporation for that purpose; but when we notified the Memorial Association of the place selected by the Commissioners, and asked for a permit to build it there, the Board of Directors refused to give it, claiming that they had a right to overrule the decision of the Commissioners, that they had the right to select any other spot, that they were the owners of the land, and that no person, not even the State of Pennsylvania, had a right to erect a monument on that land without their consent. They did make some concession, for they informed us that they would permit us to erect our monument away back there, 283 feet in the rear. You see they have laid out a carriage-drive along there, which they call Hancock Avenue, and they want us to put our monument on the other side of that Avenue, so that people can drive along and see all the monuments without getting out of their carriage. Of course we would not accommodate them by putting our monument on a spot

where we never fought, and when we attempted to dig a foundation here without a permit, I was arrested for trespass, and am now under bail to answer that charge. Our counsel filed a bill in equity asking for an injunction restraining them from interfering with us, and the Supreme Court decided the case in our favor. We thought our troubles were all over; but the Memorial Association has plenty of money, and its Board of Directors are determined to make us put our monument back on that Avenue, if they possibly can. They now come forward with a new claim. They admit that 210 of our men fell in the battle; but they allege that we lost all our men away back in the rear, that we were never here at all, that the Commissioners were mistaken in selecting this location, and that a Massachusetts Regiment and a New York Regiment did the fighting for the Philadelphia Brigade. They say they can prove all this, and they ask the Court to wait, and give them a chance to do it; so we must wait till they have had that chance. We are fighting a powerful corporation; it will take a little time, but we have no fear of the result. We will triumph in the end, and will erect and dedicate our monument on this spot, that has been solemnly selected by the Commissioners under the laws of our State.

We concluded to hold some kind of exercises, in common with our comrades of other regiments, and through the kind efforts of His Excellency, Governor Beaver, we have been permitted to temporarily erect our monument on this spot, and to hold these exercises here to-day, and we assure you we heartily thank Governor Beaver for securing us the uninterrupted enjoyment of this privilege.

Our Regiment was composed of 15 Companies, and carried 1,600 men on its rolls. We lost heavily in previous engagements, but our heaviest loss was here in this angle at the battle of Gettysburg, where 360 men were engaged, and 210 of them were either killed or wounded. We have here to-day 120 of the survivors of the Regiment, and two out of every three of the men that are now here were wounded either in that battle or in one of the others. We are determined

that our monument shall be erected upon this spot, and we will never yield unless overcome by the power of the law, to whose decrees, whether just or unjust, all good citizens bow in obedience.

Before closing I desire to return our thanks to our counsel, J. C. Neely, Esq., of Gettysburg, and William W. Wiltbank and William W. Ker, Esqs., of Philadelphia. To Mr. Wiltbank and Mr. Ker we feel especially grateful, for those gentlemen have espoused our cause, have devoted their time, talents, and energy in our behalf, have refused all compensation from us, and will continue to labor to secure us the right and justice we value beyond price. Mr. Wiltbank has been detained by professional engagements, and we regret that he is not with us to-day, but when we are permitted to dedicate our monument, he will be with us, and will receive the heartfelt thanks and congratulations of every survivor of the Seventy-Second Regiment.

Mr. Ker is with us, and I now have the pleasure to introduce to you, as the orator on this occasion, our counsel and our friend, Capt. William W. Ker.

ORATION,

BY CAPT. WILLIAM W. KER.

Comrades :

The Volunteer Firemen of the City of Philadelphia were patriotic, intelligent and brave. You were fit and worthy representatives of that organization. When you offered yourselves to the Governor of our State, you were young, strong, and inured to hardships and danger. No better material could be found in the world from which to form an army. You were mustered into the service of the United States on August 10th, 1861, and Col. D. W. C. Baxter was your first commander. Officially you were designated as the 72d Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers, but familiarly you were called "Baxter's Fire Zouaves." You were assigned to duty in the Second Corps in the Army of the Potomac, and from March, 1862, your fortunes and your fame were identified with that gallant Corps. The siege of Yorktown was a series of engagements; the battles at Fair Oaks, on May 31st, and June 1st, 1862, were followed by Peach Orchard, Savage Station, Glendale, Malvern Hill, Chantilly, Antietam, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville. You participated in them all. You gained in them experience, honor, credit and renown. You were tried and trusted veterans of the Union army.

On the 1st day of July, 1863, you numbered 23 officers and 435 men. You formed part of the 2d Brigade of the 2d Division of the 2d Corps. That was the famous "Philadelphia Brigade," commanded by that equally famous soldier, Brigadier-General Alexander S. Webb. He was leading you on to Gettysburg, to drive the invading enemy from your native State.

As we stand here to-day, our thoughts carry us back to the 1st, 2d and 3d days of July, 1863. For twenty-six years Summer has succeeded Summer, yet the scenes and occurrences of those days are as vivid and bright as though it were but yesterday. They pass before you, in panoramic view. You recall the weary march from the Rappahannock, the crossing of the Potomac at Edward's Ferry, the kind and hospitable reception at Uniontown, the halt at Taneytown on July 1st, the sad news of the death of Reynolds and defeat of the 1st and 11th Corps, the midnight march to Gettysburg, the forming of the line of battle on the morning of July 2d, the attack by the enemy in the afternoon, the loss of Brown's Battery, your counter-charge to the Emmettsburg Road, the recovery of Brown's guns, the wounding of Col. Baxter, the re-forming of your lines, the little spring in the rear where you filled your canteens and cooked your coffee, your restless sleep behind your stacked rifles, and the bright and glorious breaking of the morning of the day of July 3d.

Let us pause here, for the scene approaches the reality. Here again you see the same low stone fence. It is angle-shaped—something like a huge letter Z traced upon the ground, only the angles are right angles—the bottom line extending towards Cemetery Hill on the right, the centre line running some 260 feet to the front, and the front line reaching towards Little Round-Top on the left. Out in front of these angles are two companies of the 106th Pennsylvania, deployed as skirmishers. Behind the angles are posted Cushing's Battery and your Philadelphia Brigade. Along the rear line of the fence are eight companies of the 71st Pennsylvania, their right connecting with Arnold's Battery and their left resting at the corner of the angle; the centre line of the fence, from corner to corner of the angle, is unoccupied; along the front line of the fence are the other two companies of the 71st, their right close up in the corner; then to their left the fence is again unoccupied for the distance of 274 feet; and then comes the right of the 69th Pennsylvania. There, to the rear of the front fence, forming a line parallel with the

rear fence, is Battery A of the 4th U. S. Artillery—the renowned “Cushing’s Battery”—with the muzzles of its guns pointing over the front fence at the unoccupied space between the right of the 69th and the left of the two companies of the 71st. There, behind the Battery, and 270 feet behind the front fence, is your 72d Regiment, in line of battle to support the Battery. And there, between you and the Battery, is General Webb, slowly pacing up and down, keeping careful watch over his little Brigade.

This is your position at high noon. The Confederate batteries suddenly open fire. Every gun is hurling a missile into the Union ranks. The Union artillery replies. There you lie with your faces close to the ground. The storm of iron hail is flying around you, but you are helpless and unprotected. The air is filled with flying shot and bursting shells, and the roar drowns all other sounds. The crash is blinding, and the shock is deafening. The cannoners are falling at their posts, and Cushing’s Battery is fast being disabled. For an hour and a quarter, and the firing ceases, first on the Union side, then on the Confederate side. The first part of the great struggle is over.

Now the Confederate line of battle appears, moving rapidly over the field. They cross the Emmettsburg Road, and you see their faces. They are Pickett’s men, the flower of the Southern army. Again the artillery opens, and cannon and musketry are mingled in a deafening roar. The Confederates never falter, never waver. On they come, confident of victory. They are led by Armistead. He is seeking a place to break through the Union lines. He sees Cushing’s disabled Battery, the unoccupied fence, and urges his men rapidly towards it.

The skirmishers of the 106th run to the rear, and are hastily formed on your left flank. The two companies of the 71st retire from the front angle, and join their Regiment at the rear. The right of the 69th swings back on its centre. Cushing’s Cannoneers are piled among the ruins of their disabled guns; Sergeant Feiger and half a dozen of the men

are all that are left; one gun alone remains; it is loaded with cannister, and Cushing, Feiger and their men are around it; they move it to the front, closer to the fence, and take their places beside it. The fence in the front angle is wholly unoccupied. There is nothing to check the Confederate advance, save only that lone cannon and the heroic men beside it.

The Confederates reach the fence. Armistead jumps over it. Twelve hundred of his men follow him. They rush upon the gun. A sheet of flame from its muzzle, a deafening report, the brave young Lieutenant falls lifeless upon the ground, and Cushing's Battery is silenced forever. The Confederates have captured the angle. The Union army is cut in two at its centre. The Confederates wave their flags in triumph, and again press forward.

There you still lie—three hundred and sixty of you—crouching close to the ground. You know that your time has now come. You see the enemy advancing upon you in overwhelming numbers. You know that alone and unsupported you must meet the attack. Your hearts are filled with bitterness, and you are eager for the fray. You look to General Webb for the expected command. You see his lips moving, but can hear no sound. He points his sword to the right, then waves it towards the enemy. You are well-trained soldiers, and understand his signs. You know that he wants you to march by the right face closer to the 71st in the rear angle, then face to the left, and charge down upon the enemy. You spring to your feet. Away go haversacks and canteens. You face to the right, run quickly forward to the 71st, and face again to the left. Your courage is contagious. Some brave men of the 71st and 106th, unbidden, jump into line with you on your flanks. There stand the enemy, their bayonets bristling and their rifles smoking. They are waiting for you—for this handful of men against such fearful odds. One savage yell that rises above the din of battle, one wild and tumultuous rush, and you are upon them, discharging your rifles in their faces, beating their bayonets from their guns, and tearing their guns from their

hands. With the ferocity of madness you leap upon them, clutch them by their throats, bury your bayonets in their bodies and hurl them to the earth. Mounted on their prostrate bodies, the butts of your guns descend relentlessly, crushing them down before you. Slowly they retire, surging back into the corner in the angle. Their colors are still flying. They are yet unconquered. A color-bearer plants the flag of Virginia at the fence, and his comrades are rallying around it; like a tiger McCuen springs upon him, and wrenches the colors from his grasp. A short struggle, a terrific blow, and McBride is waving the second flag. A thrust of the bayonet, a crushing blow on the head, and two Zouaves are struggling to reach the rear with two other flags. The colors of the enemy are captured. The Virginians make a desperate rush for their colors. Again you are upon them with the fury of demons. Again your guns and your bayonets deal death and destruction in their ranks. They fall before you in great piles, wounded and dead. Armistead has fallen at the feet of your color-bearer. Their leader is gone, their colors are lost. Disheartened and dismayed, they drop their arms. Eight hundred of them surrender. Four stands of colors, and eight hundred prisoners. Every Confederate who has crossed the fence is dead, wounded or captured. Not a man of them has escaped. The Confederate army is cut in two. Away to your right and to your left they fly before your victorious comrades. The battle is over.

The ground is covered with the wounded, the dying and the dead. From the front fence to the centre, the bodies of your Zouaves lie close and thick. Sixty-two of them are dead, 146 are wounded, and two are missing. Two hundred and ten of your brave comrades have ceased to answer at your roll-call. One hundred and fifty of you are left.

To this place, this unknown spot, you have given name and fame. It is recorded in history. "The Bloody Angle at Gettysburg."

Survivors of the 72d, you have selected a monument to mark the position of your Regiment engaged in the battle of

Gettysburg on that day. It has been cast in bronze. It represents a Zouave, with his gun clubbed in his hands, striking at his enemy. It is an appropriate design, an illustrative image. On this spot you fought, you bled, and your comrades died. On this spot, you claim it is your right to erect and build your yet unbuilt monument. Who is it that gainsays your claim? What power would rob you of your right? By the memories of your saintly dead, we pledge ourselves to stand together to maintain your sacred right; and with the help of the Almighty God who aided and assisted you then, and who guards and protects you still, we will erect and build this monument on this spot, and will dedicate it to the memory of the glory, the valor and the heroism of Philadelphia's faithful Fire Zouaves.

